

Joined by parents, students and medical professionals at the University of Vermont, Rep. Peter Welch on Tuesday highlighted new health care coverage for graduating college seniors made available under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The legislation – passed into law last March – requires insurance companies to allow young adults to remain on their parents' health care plans until their 26th birthday.

"More often than not, a young person's first job out of college does not include health insurance, especially if they choose to work for a non-profit or in community service," Welch said. "College seniors graduating this month in Vermont and around the country now have health security and the flexibility to pursue entry level jobs that may not include health care coverage. And their parents have peace of mind knowing that their son or daughter is protected should they need medical care."

Historically, most college graduates became ineligible under their parents' health insurance plans the day they graduated. The new law requires insurers to cover young adults as dependents until their 26th birthday. Prior to the legislation, 30 percent of young people nationwide were uninsured, with nearly 60 percent of those citing high costs as the principal reason they lacked insurance. Since the protections went into effect in September, nearly 600,000 young adults have joined their parents' health plans. It is estimated that nearly 1.2 million may be eligible to do so.

With many Vermont college students graduating throughout May, Welch also announced on

Tuesday a new resource page on his website describing the law and detailing how young people can take advantage of the new protections. The resource page can be found at www.welch.house.gov/healthcareforyoungpeople

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